

July 26, 2018 - Hand delivered

Laura D. Jackson
Executive Director
Department of Finance and Administration
State of Mississippi
PO Box 267
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Ms. Jackson:

We want to first say thank you for the support the State of Mississippi has provided to the Jackson Zoological Society over the past several years. As you are aware, the Jackson Zoo has been fortunate to receive Bond Proceeds, which are administered through the Department of Finance and Administration. Through these funds, we have been able to resurface walkways, build animal exhibits, revitalize our education display hallway (which gives visitors hands on interaction with animals), replace A/C units, construct a train tunnel, and the list goes on and on. Without these funds, we would not be able to continue much needed improvements at the Jackson Zoo.

You have probably seen recent news stories that chronical the crossroads we are currently on with the City of Jackson. Because of recent publicity, a significant decline in attendance, an unusually rainy spring season, a decline in field trips, and various other reasons, we have had to make very tough management decisions. We are barely able to make payroll, which resulted in the decision to cut our current employees pay. We have several vendors that provide veterinarian services to our animals, food for our animals, supplies, and other necessities constantly requesting payment on outstanding bills.

We have exhausted all opportunities for additional funding from our main donors. We are soliciting donations from the public via online request almost on a weekly basis. We have pursued potential loan funds but were not successful in obtaining any loans from financial institutions.



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At this point we are out of options and out of potential avenues to fund operations. Given these circumstances, we made the decision to use funds from the Bond Proceeds to help with current operations, which include payroll, utilities, animal food, and insurance. All of which are necessities for day-to-day operations of the Jackson Zoo, which is referred to as the Project in the Memorandums of Understanding between the Jackson Zoo and the State Bond Commission.

We have every intention of restoring the funds once additional funds are received. We anticipate short term funding from the City of Jackson within the next month. We have also requested funding from the City of Jackson for the October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019 budget year. This request was based on funding that has been received from the City of Jackson in previous year. The amount received in 2017 was \$980,000. If the City of Jackson provides funding at the same level, we will have more than enough to restore the bond proceeds before the end of the 2018 calendar year.

We understand that the use of these bond proceeds for operations is not in compliance with the Memorandums of Understanding we signed prior to receipt of these funds. We ask for understanding in these difficult times and an opportunity to restore the funds. We look forward to discussing this in more detail with Mr. McDevitt at a meeting Monday the 30th.

Sincerely,



Beth Poff
Executive Director
The Jackson Zoological Society

C: Mr. Jeffrey Graves, Zoo Board President
Mr. Steven McDevitt, Director Bond Advisory Division



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